

NED
SUMMARY

AFGHANISTAN DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION PROJECT

The American Friends of Afghanistan proposes a pilot project to provide educational opportunities for Afghans in those areas of their homeland controlled by the Afghan Resistance. The focus would be on promoting democratic principles and values among the Afghan people.

The five-part project would:

1. publish reprints of already existing paperback textbooks in basic school subjects through grade six, and distribute 6,000 copies in areas of Afghanistan held by the Resistance; create and publish a series of literacy textbooks and practice reading material for adults fighting in the Resistance and distribute 5,000 copies within Afghanistan;
2. select, train and dispatch experienced Afghan teachers to Afghanistan to work with villagers to reestablish schools in their home areas and to teach basic subjects in those schools;
3. establish 20 literacy centers within Afghanistan for Freedom Fighters, to teach them to read and write during lulls in military action;
4. create a document center to collect, preserve and develop materials on Afghan history, traditions, culture and current events, in order to maintain records of Afghan life prior to the Soviet invasion, demonstrate the impact of the war on Afghan society and prepare proposals on the needs of Afghanistan in the event of a Soviet withdrawal;
5. train and equip Afghans in the use of video minicameras in order to provide video evidence of the impact of the war on the Afghan people.

The American Friends of Afghanistan (AFA), the proposed grantee and administrator of the project, is a 501(c) (3) established in September 1979 to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan. Its president is Dr. Thomas Gouttierre who is Director of the Center for Afghanistan Studies, University of Nebraska at Omaha, the leading U.S. academic center on Afghanistan. Gouttierre has spent nearly ten years in Afghanistan. Among AFA's Board of Governors are four former U.S. Ambassadors to Afghanistan -- Theodore L. Elliot, Jr.; Robert G. Neumann; Leon Poitilada; and John E. Steeves.

Programs in Afghanistan and Pakistan would be administered by the Cultural Council of the Afghan Resistance, based in Islamabad and headed by Sabahuddin Kushkaki. Kushkaki, a U.S.-educated journalist, is a former head of the Journalism School of the University of Kabul, publisher of a Kabul newspaper and Afghan Minister of Information and Culture (1972-73). After the communist coup in 1978 he spent 20 months in prison. A founder of the Cultural Council of the Afghan Resistance, Kushkaki has been serving as a full-time consultant to the Voice of America's Dari and Pushtu broadcasts. In 1983 he was a Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, D.C. Kushkaki is highly recommended without reservation by a broad range of Americans who have known him over the past 20 years.

The proposal was originally submitted to NED by the University of Nebraska at Omaha. However, the University, while continuing to support the proposal, has withdrawn its formal sponsorship. A letter (copy attached) from Chancellor Del Weber to Carl Gershman provides an explanation. - University personnel and resources would continue to be available to support the project.

A grant of \$180,845 to the American Friends of Afghanistan is recommended.

The Program Committee discussed the proposal on February 1 but took no action. Senator Hatch has requested that it be presented to the Board on March 1.

Summary of Accomplishments Provided by NED First-Year Grant

1. Development of Curricular Materials:

A. Preparation, revision, adoption, production, and distribution of primary school textbooks for grades one through six (the teachers guides have been completed). These materials are being distributed to ten Centers for Development and twenty Literacy Centers inside free Afghanistan. These textbooks and teachers guides (84 in all) represent the first complete, up-to-date, and most comprehensive, socially acceptable, educationally sound and appropriate materials. Both the textual materials and teachers guide are published in Dari and Pashto to facilitate use by Afghan children whose native language is either Dari or Pashto. These materials have been so successful that CCAR has not been able to respond adequately to the growing demands from Afghans living both inside as well as outside of Afghanistan. In addition, CCAR has had requests for materials from Australia, the United States, and various countries throughout Western Europe.

B. Based on the recommendation of local Mujahiddin commanders, teachers have been selected for and assigned to Centers for Development. These centers are intended to provide education for children from grades one through six and function as literacy centers. Teachers selected

for the centers were given an orientation to the newly published textual materials and instruction on how to utilize the accompanying teachers guide.

C. Other supplementary instructional materials have been developed, including a "Useful Knowledge" series that provides descriptions of current events and other related information that explains the Afghan Jihad.

2. Distribution of Audio Cassette Tapes Inside Afghanistan:

To help Afghan students, Freedom Fighters, and the rest of the Afghan nation to understand what is going on in Afghanistan and how they may become responsible citizens, a number of cassette tapes were prepared by CCAR and sent inside Afghanistan. It is well to remember that the Soviets and puppet government have a massive propaganda effort underway to convince the Afghan population that they (the residential population) have no alternative but to accept communist occupation and ideology. At the present time, the Karmal puppet government, under Soviet direction, provides 18 hours of radio broadcasting and 5 hours of television broadcasting time per day in an effort to spread their propaganda. While the CCAR audio-cassette tapes project is only a minor undertaking when compared to the Soviet effort, it is an attempt to offset what the Soviets are doing.

The tapes are prepared by the CCAR staff in Dari or Pashto languages, using voices familiar to the Afghan people. The tapes contain news, commentary on current events, the war,

historical information, as well as music and folk stories relevant to the war in Afghanistan.

3. Developing the Photographic Capability to Record Events Inside Afghanistan:

Six video cameras, two VCRs, a monitor and a supply of tapes and batteries have been purchased. Training for Afghan technicians to utilize this equipment in recording the educational activities and current events has been completed. As the technicians become proficient in their use of video equipment, the hard news collected inside Afghanistan would become available to video news stations in the free world.

At the present time there is no consistent and regular coverage of the war inside Afghanistan. As a consequence, in the free world the war tends to be an ignored one. Hopefully, as the Afghan technicians become more proficient, the free world will become informed of the Soviet genocide in Afghanistan on a continuing and documented basis. This part of the project, together with the other sections, can have a real, diplomatic, and immediate effect on how the global community views Afghanistan's fight for freedom.

4. Establishment of Documentation Center:

A small but active documentation center has been created to collect, preserve, and develop materials relating to Afghan history, tradition, culture, and the war that is currently taking place. These materials and/or documents are being

acquired for the purpose of maintaining records of Afghan life prior to the Communist Party take-over in 1978 and Soviet occupation in December 1979. They will serve to demonstrate the impact that the war is having on Afghan society today, and to provide a data-base on the needs of Afghanistan in the event of Soviet withdrawal. Currently CCAR has managed to initiate its collection of documents, historical books, transcribed interviews, newspapers, and pamphlets relevant to the current war in Afghanistan. These materials are available to accredited researchers, scholars, and agencies of government who are trying to learn more about Afghanistan, its people, and what is happening to Afghan society because of the terrible war being fought there.

The significance of the documentation center cannot be overstated. Most of the published materials in Afghanistan, whether it be textbooks, historical documents, religious books, museum articles, or other materials representing Afghan society, culture, values, and tradition have been systematically and purposely destroyed. These materials are viewed as obstacles to the Sovietization process that the Soviet occupiers and puppet supporters have initiated. The destruction of this vital cultural heritage is not just limited to public facilities, but has been extended by the Soviets to private libraries and collections found during house searches by Soviet security forces.